

In conclusion, I should like to read a paragraph from the 1983 annual report of The de Havilland Aircraft of Canada, Limited:

There are two aspects in particular affecting the ultimate profit or less of the Dash-8 program. The first relates to the cost of lending money to purchasers of the aircraft. The second relates to cost of production. In each case, the Dash-8 is facing stiff competition. Because competitors are largely supported by their governments—

We in the Opposition are asking that the Liberal Government be competitive with offshore governments selling aircraft in Canada.

Mr. Maurice Harquail (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans): Mr. Speaker, I am convinced that the Hon. Member will agree about our competitive abilities, not only in international trade matters but at home. I think we have been very effective when it comes to competition at all levels, not just in terms of commerce and the marketplace. In recent times, I am sure he will agree that our competition has been very effective according to the statistical figures which are released from time to time.

The Hon. Member for Peterborough (Mr. Domm) appears to be worried about de Havilland's ability to meet the competition for commuter aircraft. He worries that de Havilland is asking too high a price and that it cannot offer competitive financing because of our arrangements under the GATT.

Let me deal first with competition. The Hon. Member has claimed that the Shorts 360, a plane built in Northern Ireland, is a comparable product which sells for \$2 million less than the Dash-8. The Shorts 360 is not comparable. It is not pressurized, which means that it cannot fly above 10,000 feet. For example, most of the weather in Ontario where Air Atonabee flies requires a plane which can climb above 10,000 feet in order to avoid turbulence. The Shorts 360 is also slower than the Dash-8. As I said, the plane is not competitive; it does not have the capacities of the Dash-8.

Let me also clear the air on another point. The price offered by de Havilland does not keep rising, as has been claimed in recent news stories. The standard practice in the industry is to set a price in a particular year and to add an escalation clause. This is the practice followed by de Havilland. The price is set in 1982 dollars with escalation for inflation. The basic price itself has not changed.

The Government is fully aware of the concerns raised in public by regional air carriers. Their comments simply show what de Havilland is up against. We will not negotiate sales contracts in public. I can say, however, that the Government is working very hard to address these concerns.

The Government has told de Havilland that it will provide assistance to enable it to meet competition from Brazil or Britain or wherever. The exact form of that assistance is in the final stages of discussion within government, but the commitment is solid. Hon. Members will be aware that the form of assistance eventually arrived at will have to accord with Canada's international undertakings and that we must be very careful on that count. We are a trading nation, and interna-

tional trade is governed by rules which on the whole benefit Canada greatly.

The Hon. Member for Peterborough quoted the Minister responsible for CDIC, and thus de Havilland, as saying that we might meet Britain's term of 7 per cent financing. I have checked the transcript and found that what Senator Austin said was:

What we want to do is well at market interest rates and at prices that recover our costs of production.

● (1820)

He also noted that we are indeed competitive on the cost of production side. Perhaps the Hon. Member did not hear him correctly.

Let me reiterate what this Government has said many times. We will not allow de Havilland to be driven from the marketplace due to predatory financing practices by its competitors. The Government is committed to de Havilland and to the Dash-8.

We all agree that we not only want this company to be successful but to provide jobs in Canada. We must also support the point of view that we should arrange to purchase these aircraft within Canada within the terms of our production.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION—OFFICE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN. (B) EQUAL PAY FOR EQUAL WORK

Ms. Margaret Mitchell (Vancouver East): Mr. Speaker, on February 20 I raised with the Minister responsible for the Status of Women the concern of women that the Office of Equal Opportunities for Women in the Public Service Commission was to be closed on April 1. Despite the Minister's unequivocal statement that the office would not close, it did in fact close its doors on May 1, 1984. This office was important because it provided information, training advocacy, counselling and referral services for women, especially for 95,000 clerks and secretaries, the lowest paid public servants.

Political pressure from this side of the House and intense lobbying by many women's organizations followed. On May 14 the Public Service Commission opened a Women's Program Centre which will be integrated into its Operations Directorate. While many of the essential functions of the EOW will remain, the office will be under intense scrutiny to make sure that the watchdog and advocacy function is maintained. This will be very difficult in an integrated structure.

In the west, cuts have already begun. The EOW office in the prairie region has been unilaterally reorganized so that the EOW officer there will now spend only one half of her time on direct equal opportunities work—one quarter of her time for each of Manitoba and Saskatchewan. This is completely unacceptable, particularly in light of the Minister's statement on February 20 that "regional equal opportunities offices are not under review."

Both the Minister and the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. Gray) attempted to sidestep responsibility for equality